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“ISRAEL STANDS TOGETHER”:



COMMEMORATIVE COIN ISSUED FOR ISRAEL'S INDEPENDENCE DAY



FEATURING:

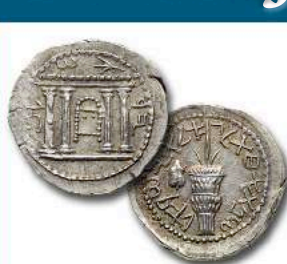
THE MONIES OF THE LODZ GHETTO POST OFFICE by Steve and Ray Feller

THE GREAT CHORAL OF ST. PETERSBURG MEDALS by Dr. Vladimir Bernshtam

WAS THEODOR “DR. SEUSS” GEISEL JEWISH? by Mel Wacks, N.L.G.

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INVITATION

Join us June 16, 2024 for an AINA Zoom session, noon-1:30 PM EST (9-10:30 AM PST, 5-6:30 PM GMT, 7-8:30 Israel). Attendees can sign up for 5-10 minutes to show off what they have in Israel or Judaica, ask questions of other attendees, or just schmooze.

Please email AmerIsraelCoin@gmail.com to reserve a spot, though we will try to fit people in ad hoc as time permits.

If we have your email, you will receive a link the week before.

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Passcode 269677

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I am preparing now for two talks: one at my synagogue's tikkun leyl Shavuot (all-night study session the eve of Shavuot) on Christian Hebraists and their medals (based on my talk at the AINA on-line meeting last February) and a description of the new AINA catalog I am still working on.

I will be sending draft PDF copies by email to any interested members of the trade coins section. I may or may not have the mint sets section finished by then, so that may have to be sent separately. It will likely take a couple of years to finish the commemorative coins section, although I have already assigned catalog numbers.

My exhibit on Israel's gold coinage, which took first place in World Coins at FUN in January, also took first place in World Coins at PAN in May, although with a lot less competition. It is possible to share our love of Israel coinage with the public and get positive responses.

Please join our Zoom session on June 16 (I know it's Fathers' Day, but we will only take an hour). ☞

Simcha Kuritzky

THE MONIES OF THE LODZ GHETTO POST OFFICE

By Steve and Ray Feller

The Lodz Ghetto in German-occupied Poland was announced in February 1940 in a poor and closed off region of the city. Being in Western Poland, the German government annexed the city in the Reich and renamed it Litzmannstadt after well-known WWI General Litzmann. The ghetto officially was the Litzmannstadt Ghetto. Over the course of its existence over 300,000 people, mostly Jews, passed through its gates. When the ghetto was liberated by the Soviet army in January 1945 they found just under 900 people alive within its confines. Most had been sent to their deaths at Chelmno and Auschwitz, though 20% died in the ghetto itself from starvation, illness, or cold (US Holocaust Memorial Museum).

Governmental operations were carried out under the control of the Germans through a Judenrat (a Jewish “council” who were forced to implement the wishes of the Nazis) led by egomaniac Mordechai Chaim Rumkowski. The ghetto was similar to a micro country with its own bank and money system (see Figure 1), two post offices, industry, hospitals, holiday spots for the well off, and schools. In order to institute total economic control, hundreds, if not

Continued

thousands, of scrip issues were produced for many commercial activities. These scrips added complication to an already strained economy. Amongst these issues were several for the post offices alone. In a real sense these represent a typical example of the sort of control that was exerted within the ghetto.



Figure 1: Face of the fifty-mark note of the Lodz Ghetto dated 15 May 1940. This was the largest denomination issued within the ghetto. Note Rumkowski's signature (Steve Feller collection).

There were two post offices within the ghetto boundary and these buildings still stand today. The rules for the mail changed over the course of the Ghetto's existence. As in other camps and ghettos, mail was also censored. According to the diary of Jehuda Lubinski, any mail that described the conditions of the ghetto was destroyed by order of Rumkowski, who did not want the ghetto represented

Continued

poorly. Mail was allowed out of the ghetto every so often but, also, there was an extensive intra ghetto mail system. It is worth reiterating that there were many people living in Lodz—up to 164,000 at its peak. This is a large number of people and systems like mail become important for internal communication. There were also times when people could receive parcels from outside the ghetto, if various and changing rules were followed.



Figure 2: The main post office within the Lodz Ghetto was here at 4/6 Plac Koscielny (Lodz-ghetto.com). This was the treasury building as well. Among its duties, the treasury distributed ghetto currency that became known as *Rumkis*, see Figure 1.

Continued



Figure 3: A branch post office within the ghetto. The white sign over the door says Postamt which means post office. The address was 1 Dworska St. (now called Organizacji WiN St.) (USHMM).

To honor Rumkowski's birthday in 1944 stamps were proposed. Essays of proposed stamps (Figures 4a, 4b, and 4c are shown here:



Continued



Figures 4a, 4b (Feller collection), and 4c (Steve Feller collection): Essays for Lodz Ghetto stamps, 1944. They feature vignettes of the ghetto, its workers, and Rumkowski. These are rare. Fakes dominate Ebay and lack the fine detail and quality paper of the originals.

Note that 4a is in the rare *tete-beche* configuration (one stamp oriented 180° compared to the other). This is likely due to the fact that there was a philatelic office in the ghetto that sold stamps to collectors! According to Edward Victor: “Many Germans bought large quantities of these stamps in the hope that they would have great value after the war.” As it happens these speculators have proven to be right. A prominent image on the stamp is one of the bridges spanning the Aryan (non-Jewish) section of Lodz.

Continued



Figure 5: Bridge spanning the Aryan street that was between sections of the Lodz Ghetto (USHMM).

It is not clear if the final stamp products shown in Figures 6a, b, and c came into circulation. If they did, it was for a short time period.

Continued



Figures 6a, 6b, and 6c: Lodz Ghetto stamps in 5, 10, and 20 pfennig denominations. Besides Rumkowski, these stamps feature vignettes of work and industry (Steve Feller Collection).

Because of inflation the ghetto was short of small change and the post office issued its own 10 pfennig chits on April 17, 1942, and May 15, 1944, see Figures 7a and 7b:

Continued



Figures 7a and 7b: Postal money issued 17 April 1942 and 15 May 1944. Both are denominated 10 pfennigs (Steve Feller Collection).

Also, due to a shortage of small change, 50 pfennig paper currency notes from the ghetto were overprinted in smaller denominations: 20, 10, and 20 pfennigs, and then cut into thirds, see Figure 8. These are rare and often faked.



Figure 8: Overprinted 50 pfennig Lodz ghetto note for use in postage in the ghetto. The notes were divided into three pieces each for use in the post offices. (*Silent Witnesses*, p 75. The Charleton E. Meyer Collection, Holocaust Museum Houston).

Continued

In late 1942 two 10 pfennig coins were made in magnesium alloy. These corroded easily and few undamaged coins remain. The illustrated coins include a pattern rejected by German authorities due to its similarity to the zinc German circulating 10 pfennig coin and the approved design, see Figures 9a and 9b.



Figure 9: Lodz Ghetto coins. Rejected pattern, on top. Approved design, on bottom. This could be used to purchase postage (Steve Feller Collection).

Other coins were struck in 1943 in 5-, 10-, and 20-mark denominations. Curiously, the ghetto didn't adjust the price

Continued

of stamps throughout the existence of the ghetto, even though inflation was substantial. Perhaps this was to show recipients that the mail service from the ghetto was comparable in cost to the rest of the German Reich.

The post office had its own kitchen to feed its workers and that kitchen issued food coupons:



Figure 10: Post Office kitchen soup scrip of the Lodz Ghetto (Steve Feller Collection).

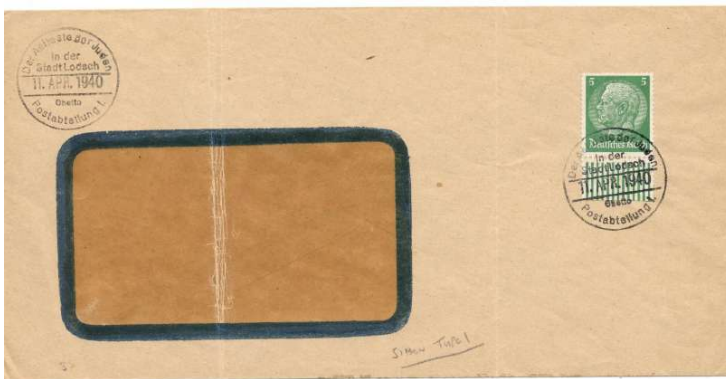
Many other places of employment fed their workers food as well; the meals were of poor quality.

Continued



Figure 11: Postal workers from the Lodz Ghetto (USHMM).

Lodz was renamed Litzmannstadt in honor of Hitler's birthday on April 20, 1940. Near the same time the last of the postal cancellations were made using the Polish name Lodz:



Continued



Figure 12 a and b: Cover from the Lodz Ghetto dated 11 April 1940. Note the use of *Stadt Lods* for the German name of Lodz before the renaming to Litzmannstadt (Steve Feller Collection).

Post cards were used externally as well as internally, See Figures 13 and 14 a and b.

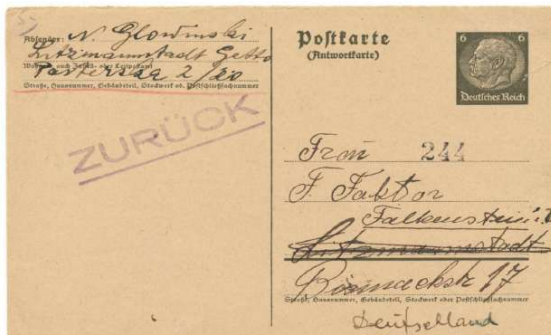


Figure 13: Postcard sent from the Lodz Ghetto to Germany. *Zurück* means to return to sender. Note that the Von Hindenburg stamp is uncanceled as a result (Steve Feller Collection).

Continued

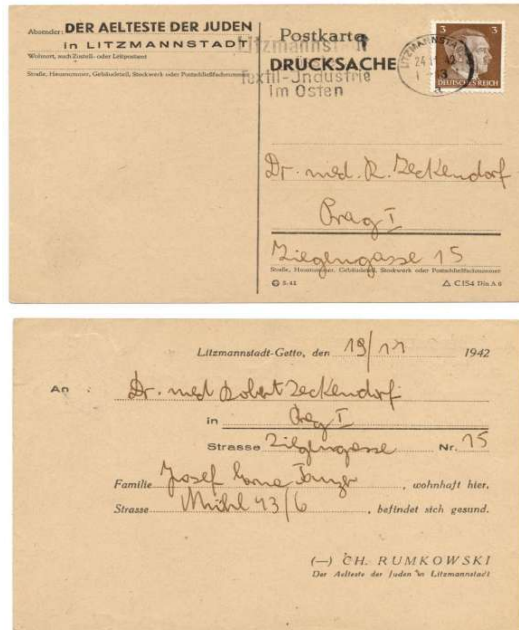


Figure 14 a and b: Postcard from the Lodz Ghetto government to Prague announcing that a ghetto resident is *befindet sich gesund* or is *situated in good health* (Steve Feller Collection).

The Chronicle of the Lodz Ghetto, 1941-1944 is an excellent source of original information about the ghetto. This was an official record of the ghetto kept by the Jewish government (Judenrat). Regarding the post office, here is a relevant entry of April 16, 1942, a day before the reopening of the post office after being shut for a long period:

Continued

Thursday, April 16, 1942

From the Post Office:

Because of the continued suspension of postal service, in addition to handling local mail, forwards 1,000 to 1,100 pre-printed postal cards, which carry information about the state of the sender's health and/or request that money be sent. The return address on the pre-printed postal cards is Eldest of the Jews. Money orders, totaling a half million (German marks) per month, arrive in the ghetto continuously. Since March 20, Maurycy Goldblum has been in charge of running the Post Office.

Many postcards have survived. There are many more historical notes in the *Chronicle* as well.



Figure 15: Poster announcing the various coupons and scrip needed in a given week in the Lodz Ghetto.

It is certain that there is much more philatelic and numismatic history regarding just the post office. Indeed, overall, there are likely more than a thousand other forms of money that were used in the ghetto—in the form of ration coupons for individual food items, bread cards, charcoal money, glove money, scrip, meal vouchers, tokens, medals,

Continued


etc. New forms of money were issued weekly. Notices were posted throughout the ghetto regarding these emergency monies, see Figure 15. Some of these issues are in the book *Silent Witnesses: Civilian Camp Money of WWII*. 



Figure 16: Postal delivery employee delivers the mail in the Lodz Ghetto (USHMM). Note the uniform.

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Museums

Charleton E. Meyer Collection, Holocaust Museum Houston

USHMM: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

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<http://www.lodz-ghetto.com/>

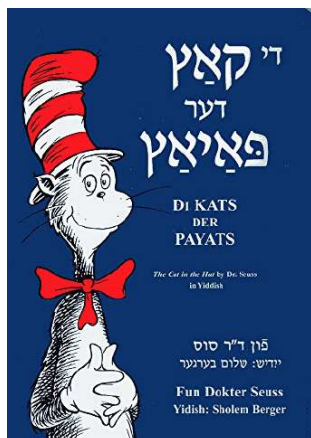
WAS THEODOR “DR. SEUSS” GEISEL JEWISH?

By Mel Wacks, N.L.G.

The Theodor Seuss Geisel Award is given annually to the author(s) and illustrator(s) of the most distinguished American book for beginning readers published in English in the United States during the preceding year. The winner(s), recognized for their literary and artistic achievements that demonstrate creativity and imagination to engage children in reading, receives a bronze medal. Honor Book authors and illustrators receive certificates, which are presented at the ALA (American Library Association) Annual Conference. The award was established in 2004 and first presented in 2006.



Continued



“The Cat in the Hat” in Yiddish. Dr. Seuss books were also translated into Hebrew.

The award is named for the world-renowned children’s author, Theodor Geisel. “A person’s a person no matter how small,” Theodor Geisel, a.k.a. Dr. Seuss, would say. “Children want the same things we want: to laugh, to be challenged, to be entertained and delighted.” Brilliant and playful, Dr. Seuss charmed his way into the consciousness of four generations of youngsters and parents. In the process, he helped them to read.

If you google “Is Theodore Geisel Jewish?” you will find a thorough answer in an article in *The Jewish Press*: “A champion of the rights of American Jews, Seuss himself experienced anti-Semitism when, in his college days, he was refused entry into certain circles because of a misperception that he was Jewish: “I had black hair and a long nose, and it

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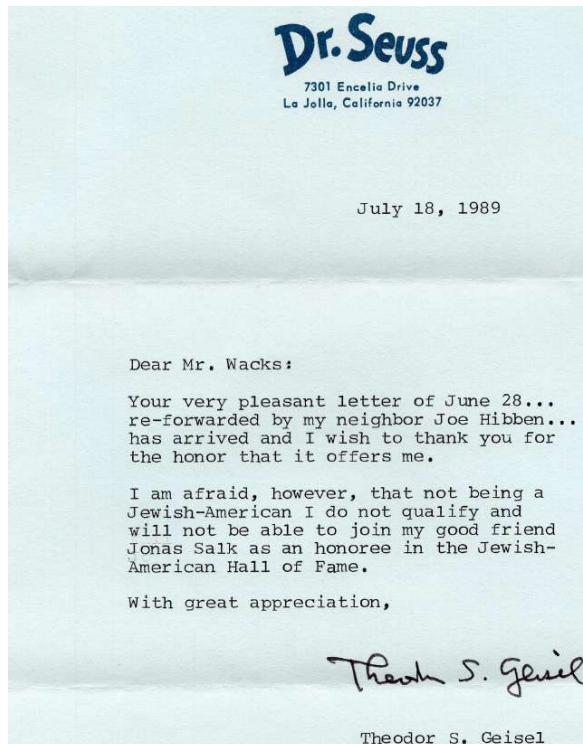
took a year and a half before the word got out that I wasn't [Jewish]." In fact, Seuss was a practicing Lutheran who often spoke out in support of equal opportunity for Jews. As just one notable example, though he supported the establishment by the University of California of a local campus in his beloved La Jolla, where he maintained his mountaintop home, he sternly warned civic and church audiences that they could never develop a great university until they ceased discriminating against Jews, specifically with respect to home ownership."

Kveller reports that: "The late Theodore Geisel wasn't born Jewish, but he died as an honorary member of the tribe. In 1969 the mayor of Jerusalem, Teddy Kollek, awarded Dr. Seuss the title of 'honorary Jew' for being an ally. Need a refresher? Kveller author Lela Casey writes that Dr. Seuss was public about his support for the Jews, and was possibly the first illustrator to 'predict and denounce the fate of the Jewish people under Hitler.' Geisel's most well-known gesture in this regard was his book, *The Sneetches*, in which the Star Belly Sneetches were marked with yellow stars to separate themselves from Plain Sneetches — an allusion to the yellow stars Jews were forced to wear during the Holocaust."

I have a personal letter from Mr. Geisel about this subject. In 1989, I wrote a letter to Theodor Geisel, indicating that "I am sure that it would greatly please Dr. Seuss' avid

Continued

admirers around the world if Theodor Geisel joined Albert Einstein, George Gershwin, Jonas Salk, Irving Berlin, et al in the Magnes Museum's Jewish-American Hall of Fame." Mr. Geisel sent the following reply: "Your very pleasant letter of June 28 ... has arrived and I wish to thank you for the honor that it offers me. I am afraid, however, that not being a Jewish-American I do not qualify and will not be able to join my good friend Jonas Salk as an honoree into the Jewish-American Hall of Fame."



Regardless, I will always treasure this letter. ▢

COMMEMORATIVE MEDALS IN HONOR OF THE ANNIVERSARIES OF THE GREAT CHORAL OF ST. PETERSBURG

By Dr. Vladimir Bernshtam

In the mid-19th century, the Jewish community of St. Petersburg numbered around 10,000 people, a figure that did not exceed 20,000 by the beginning of the 20th century. However, these few thousand people in the capital constituted the core of the most educated, cultured, influential, and prosperous segment of Russian Jewry. They paved the way that the entire people, willingly or unwillingly, followed. Their activities were highly visible both on Jewish streets and within Russian society. Their personalities, ideas, and the books, newspapers, and journals they published had a tremendous impact on the youth, especially in the late 19th to early 20th centuries. These individuals significantly shaped not only Russian Jewry but also the global Jewish community, as noted by Michael Beizer in his book "The Jews of St. Petersburg: Excursions Through a Noble Past" [1].

An illustration of these words can be found in the lives and activities of the renowned bankers and patrons, the Ginzburg barons [2], who sought to integrate Jews into the multiethnic society of the Russian Empire while preserving their ethnic identity and Jewish religion. For this purpose,

Continued

Evzel Ginzburg founded the “Society for the Spread of Enlightenment among the Jews of Russia” in 1863. Evzel Ginzburg served as the society’s chairman from its inception until his death in 1878, after which his son Horace took the helm from 1878 until 1909. The society provided financial assistance to Jewish periodicals in Russian, translated Jewish religious and secular literature into Russian, aided in the establishment of Jewish libraries, and awarded scholarships to Jewish students.

In 1877, the St. Petersburg Mint issued a silver medal (Figure 1) in honor of Baron Evzel Ginzburg. The renowned medalist Avenir Griliches designed the medal. Encircling the portrait on the medal is the inscription: "Baron Joseph Evzel, son of Rabbi Gavriel Yakov Ginzburg".



Figure 1

Another medal, which can be considered dedicated to the Ginzburg family, is a silver medal (Figure 2) with a diameter

Continued

of 60 millimeters, issued for the fiftieth anniversary of the "Society for the Spread of Enlightenment among the Jews of Russia". On the obverse of the medal, alongside the society's name, are the Hebrew words "Yihe Or" (Let there be light). On the reverse, the name of the society in Hebrew, the Latin numeral L (fifty), and the dates 1863–1913 according to both the Julian and Jewish calendars.



Figure 2

The Ginzburgs actively participated in the Jewish religious life of the capital of the Russian Empire and played a pivotal role as primary organizers in the construction of the capital's choral synagogue.

In the mid-nineteenth century, there were several small prayer houses (moles) in the city, which were insufficient for the Jewish population of St. Petersburg. In one of them, the Temporary Mollel for educated Jews, the first choral service in the capital took place in September 1868, where,

Continued

in addition to the cantor, a synagogue choir led by a conductor participated. After some time, a meeting was held at the residence of the Actual State Councillor, first guild merchant Baron Horace Ginzburg, under his chairmanship, to discuss the construction of a permanent St. Petersburg choral synagogue. During this meeting, a preliminary subscription for the necessary donations was initiated. A decision was made to submit a request for the construction of the choral synagogue in the capital. After receiving approval on October 11, 1869, at a meeting in the Temporary Mollel, a committee for the construction of the synagogue was elected under the chairmanship of Horace Ginzburg. The Governor of St. Petersburg approved the elected members of the committee on December 7, 1869, and confirmed the permission received from the Ministry of Internal Affairs to collect funds for the construction of the choral synagogue. In February 1880, architects L.I. Bakhman and I.I. Shaposhnikov, winners of the synagogue project competition, presented their design calculated for 1490 worshipers. The project was submitted for consideration to the City Administration, which approved it. The facade sketch of the synagogue required imperial approval. However, the Governor wrote to the Ministry of Internal Affairs expressing his negative opinion: the synagogue's facade was too magnificent compared to Christian churches and exceeded them in height. After this conclusion, Alexander II did not approve the project. The architects created new drawings, significantly reducing the

Continued

size of the synagogue, and on May 16, 1881, Alexander III approved the preliminary design. Construction was led by architect A.V. Malov and was completed in 1893. The total cost of construction amounted to 500,000 gold rubles, the majority of which was contributed by Baron Horace Ginzburg [1].

After the October Revolution of 1917, the synagogue fell into decline. The number of parishioners was small, the main building was not heated, and it opened only sporadically [1]. On June 29, 1929, a resolution of the Lensovet Presidium was issued to close the Jewish religious community, and on January 17, 1930, the Lenoblispolkom Presidium decision led to the closure of the synagogue. However, following a complaint by Jews to the All-Russian Central Executive Committee on June 1, 1930, the synagogue was reopened [3]. Currently, the St. Petersburg Choral Synagogue is the second-largest in Europe and the largest in Russia. A restoration was undertaken from 2000 to 2005. The facade was returned to its original terracotta-red color (Figure 3).

The author is aware of medals issued for three anniversaries of the St. Petersburg Choral Synagogue. To commemorate centennial of Synagogue, the St. Petersburg Mint issued a medal designed by medalist Alexey Korolyuk. The medal was crafted from two metals – tombac with a diameter of 62 mm, limited to 50 copies (Figure 4), and German silver

Continued

with a diameter of 30 mm, produced in a run of 300 copies (Figure 5) [4].



Figure 3. St. Petersburg Choral Synagogue (Author: Alex 'Florstein' Fedorov, CC BY-SA 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=34107175>) [3].

In 2003, the 110th anniversary of the opening of the synagogue coincided with the widely celebrated 300th anniversary of the founding of St. Petersburg. To mark this occasion, at the initiative of Sergey Efimovich Shagalov, a member of the Jewish community of the Grand Choral Synagogue of St. Petersburg, medals were issued. On the obverse of the medal, there is an image of the Admiralty,

Continued

the dates 1703-2003, inscriptions "300 years" and "St. Petersburg" in both Russian and English. On the reverse, the Grand Choral Synagogue is depicted, with the dates 1893 and 2003, along with the inscription "Grand Synagogue" in Russian, English, and Hebrew. Table medals in silver and bronze colors with a diameter of 34 mm are known (Figures 6 and 7), as well as medal on a ribbon (Figure 8).



Figure 4



Figure 5

Continued



Figure 6



Figure 7

Continued



Figure 8



Figure 9

Continued

In 2013, the Jewish community of St. Petersburg celebrated the 120th anniversary of the Synagogue. In honor of this event, a commemorative Torah Scroll was commissioned. The Jewish community of St. Petersburg organized a fundraising campaign for the creation of the jubilee Torah Scroll, and hundreds of residents contributed to the cause. Donors were awarded a commemorative medal (see Fig. 9). Depending on the size of their contribution, individuals received medals of three types: silver with gilding, plain silver, or brass. Anastasia Sukhanova created the design of the medals. The diameter of the medal is 35 mm, and its thickness is 2 mm. The silver medals weigh 12 grams and are made of 925-grade silver. On the obverse side of the medal is an image of the Grand Choral Synagogue inside a six-pointed star, along with the inscription: "Grand Choral Synagogue of St. Petersburg 120 years." On the reverse side is the inscription in Hebrew: "Torah Scroll of the Jews of St. Petersburg." These medals were graciously manufactured without charge by the member of the religious community and the CEO of the "Sadko" jewelry factory, Mikhail Katz [5].

In conclusion, the author expresses deep gratitude to the synagogue staff Elena Gurevich, Sara Rabinovich, Anna Brodetskaya, as well as Sergey Efimovich Shagalov, for the kindly provided information. ▢

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“ISRAEL STANDS TOGETHER”: THE BANK OF ISRAEL ISSUES A COMMEMORATIVE COIN IN THE INDEPENDENCE DAY SERIES

Courtesy of *The Bank of Israel Press Release*

The Bank of Israel announces the issue of a commemorative coin, with the theme of “Israel Stands Together”, marking the 76th Independence Day of the State of Israel, and under the shadow of the events of October 7th and the “Swords of Iron” War that erupted as a result. Commemorative coins in the Independence Day series have been issued by the Bank since 1958, and they mark outstanding events in the life of the nation and the State, values incorporated in society, and its representative symbols.

The terror attack on October 7, and the “Swords of Iron” War that erupted as a result, brought, in addition to the terrible tragedy, broad displays of unity and national resilience. The presence of soldiers of the Israel Defense Forces and those in the reserves at the front, and the citizens on the home front, supporting each other, brought to light the unity, social cohesion, and the mutual assistance that have characterized Israel’s society since the founding of the State. This extensive social action raises the hope for unity in Israeli society both in times of peace and in war, which will help in the continued existence and prosperity of the State of Israel.

The coin’s reverse side, designed by Zvika Roitman, displays extended hands, just before grasping each other. In the

Continued

bottom section of the coin there is a tractor riding alongside rows, and in the background, there are homes and flora typical of the localities in the Gaza envelope. On the upper section of the coin is the wording “Israel Stands Together”, against a background of the number 76 to mark the 76th Independence Day of the State of Israel. The coin’s obverse side, designed by Eytan Alon, has 6 hands grasping each other as a symbol of unity.



The coin is issued in face values of NIS 10 (gold proof), NIS 2 (silver proof), and NIS 1 (silver prooflike), and is available for sale and marketed to the public through the Israel Coins and Medals Corporation Ltd. and the G.R.A.S. design company, which market the commemorative coins issued by the Bank of Israel. נח

JEWISH-AMERICAN HALL OF FAME MEDAL SERIES ENDS AFTER 54 YEARS

Mel Wacks, Director of the Jewish-American Hall of Fame, which was the longest series of medals being issued in the United States, has announced the end of the series due to the inability to find a mint to produce high quality medals at a reasonable cost. Wacks said “Every one of these medals has a story to tell. Every medal that we have issued from 1969 through 2023 is a numismatic ambassador fighting antisemitism — whether it is the story of how Haym Salomon died penniless after giving over \$300,000 to support the American Revolution, or how Jonas Salk insisted that the Polio vaccine belongs to the world rather than bringing him personal profit. Or how Gertrude Elion battled misogyny to develop drug treatments that have saved millions of lives around the world, or how Irving Berlin wrote *God Bless America* and donated the profits to the Boy and Girl Scouts.”

The 54 Jewish-American Hall of Fame medals were created by a Who’s Who of America’s greatest medalists — winners of the American Numismatic Society’s J. Sanford *Saltus Award* for Signal Achievement in the Art of the Medal (Eugene Daub, Alex Shagin, and Karen Worth) and the American Numismatic Association’s Numismatic Art Award for Excellence in Medallic Sculpture (Eugene Daub, Virginia Janssen, Jim Licaretz, Hal Reed, Alex Shagin,

Continued

Marika Somogyi, Paul Vincze, Gerta Ries Wiener, and Karen Worth).

Wacks considers the Jewish-American Hall of Fame medals “a great success.” He says that “A grand total of over 25,000 Jewish-American Hall of Fame medals have been made, and these reside in collections throughout the United States, and as far away as China. They are in museums in Berkeley and Cincinnati, England, Israel and Sweden.” Over a half million dollars (in 2023 dollars) has been raised through the sales of Jewish-American Hall of Fame medals for non-profit organizations such as the Judah L. Magnes Museum (Berkeley, California), the Skirball Museum (Cincinnati, Ohio), the American Numismatic Society (New York City, New York), the American Jewish Historical Society (New York City, New York), and plaques have been contributed to the Virginia Holocaust Museum (Richmond, Virginia). In addition to the regular visitors, thousands of school children view the Jewish-American Hall of Fame plaques every year at the Virginia Holocaust Museum. And soon, there will be an exhibit of the medals at the new Jewish Community Campus in the East Bay (Oakland). Mel Wacks is particularly proud of the Jewish-American Hall of Fame’s award-winning website www.amuseum.org/jahf. The website won the Numismatic Literary Guild’s award for the Best Non-Commercial Web Site in 2002. Featured on the website are over 50 biographies of all the Honorees in the Jewish-American Hall

Continued

of Fame, broken up by categories — Business, Entertainment, Literature & Art, Medicine, Military, Music, Public Service, Religion, Science, Social Welfare, Sports, etc. There are also fun quizzes, interesting articles, and a Collector's Guide containing the mintage figures of all the medals made in bronze, silver and gold.

Jewish-American Hall of Fame medals are generally offered on eBay. And the Jewish-American Hall of Fame has a small inventory of past issues. They are offering new collectors a starter set of three bronze medals for the special price of \$100 plus \$10 shipping; call 818-225-1348 to order. For further information visit the website at www.amuseum.org, and you can read “Medals of the Jewish-American Hall of Fame 1969-2019” by Mel Wacks on the Newman Numismatic Portal.



While the Jewish-American Hall of Fame is no longer issuing medals, it will continue to honor a new inductee each year by creating a plaque that will hang in the Virginia

Continued

Holocaust Museum in Richmond. For 2024, the honoree is the actress/singer Molly Picon. The plaque was designed by Eugene Daub.

Molly Picon (1898-1992) was an American actress and singer of stage, screen, radio and television. She began her career in Yiddish theater and film, rising to a star, before transitioning into character roles in English-language productions. During WWII, Picon performed at army bases all over the U.S. and Canada in an effort to boost morale. Later, traveling at considerable peril to their own lives, Picon and her husband Jacob Kalich were the first entertainers to tour Displaced Persons camps after the war. There is a star celebrating Molly Picon and Jacob Kalich on the Yiddish Theater Walk of Fame on 2nd Avenue and 10th Street.

Molly Picon was later cast as an Italian mother opposite Frank Sinatra in Neil Simon's screen adaption of *Come Blow Your Horn*, for which she received an Academy Award nomination. Molly went on to star on Broadway, *Milk and Honey*. In 1971, Picon starred in the film version of *Fiddler on the Roof*. Molly Picon appeared on television as in a recurring role as Mrs. Bronson in the NBC police comedy *Car 54, Where Are You?*, and in a few episodes of *The Facts of Life* as Natalie's grandmother. Her final role was as Roger Moore's mother in the comedies *Cannonball Run* and its sequel *Cannonball Run II* in 1981 and 1984, respectively. ▢

PERSPECTIVES ON THE ISRAEL COIN MARKET

By Aaron Oppenheim, N.L.G.

As a collector of Israel numismatics for over a half century, I have learned to expect the usual wonderment when I meet people who have never known about the many coins and medals that have been produced in all the years of Israel, from ancient to modern. Having observed the trends, fads, and market cycles over time, this article will present my analysis on segments of the collecting arena which collectors, especially newer ones, may find to be instructive.

The overarching phenomenon that has affected collecting interests and market values in particular, is quite obviously the advent of the internet. Information (Academic books, Catalogs, Third-party grading services) documentation (sales and provenance), and images (Hi-resolution and videos), all of which are relatively speaking new (considering my age) have all contributed to make collecting easier than ever in terms of pricing and data integrity. Whereas mail order price lists and coin shows were the traditional vehicle for coin shopping, today one can easily peruse online market platforms, participate in on-line auctions on virtually any day.

Ancient Jewish Coins

While focusing on the coins issued in Israel under Jewish sovereignty from the time of the Hasmonean Dynasty (1st

Continued

century BCE) and later during the First Revolt against the Romans (1st century CE) and 60 years later the Second Revolt (also known as Bar Kochba Revolt), this area of collecting has grown enormously in popularity due to three factors:

- 1) Definitive updated scholarly works describing the coin types;
- 2) Rising prices for virtually all coins of quality and scarcity documented from auction sales;
- 3) Strict regulations by the Israel Antiquities Authority requiring licensed dealers and specifically permits to export coins out of country.

Trends show a steady increase in prices; high quality coins continue to realize very strong prices, and middle quality are more expensive than ever before. This is an area with solid fundamentals I believe will only increase in value over time.



Hasmonean Dynasty Alexander Jannaeus Prutah. Value about \$150

Palestine Mandate Coinage

Many serious collectors have been attracted to the coinage in circulation during the British Mandate period, just prior

Continued

to the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. It is an easy set to assemble in circulated condition, just 59 pieces in all, seven denominations in bronze, copper-nickel, and silver issued in various years from 1927 until 1946. A minuscule amount of 1947-dated coins are virtually unobtainable and are rare. Perhaps the greatest appeal to the Israel collector is the Hebrew legend (along with English and Arabic) and the Alef-Yud, which is the abbreviation for Eretz Yisrael – Land of Israel.



1927 Palestine 2 Mils coin. Value \$25 in Brilliant Uncirculated condition.

There continues to be a growing demand for the highest grades of condition of all the coins, as evidenced by recorded sales. This series is collected by British Commonwealth coin collectors, Jews in Israel and the diaspora, and collectors in Arab countries, primarily in Jordan. Trilingual (three languages) and Holey (hole in center of coin) collectors are also not to be dismissed. One is advised to check the populations of graded coins at both NGC and PCGS to get a sense of the relative scarcity of a particular denomination by date and grade. There are dozens of competitive registry sets between these two third-

Continued

party grading companies. With the transparency of coin grades and sales as documented for 40 years, one can expect this area to continue to grow and rise in value in the future.

Israel Trade Coins

The coins issued by the State of Israel for circulation are referred to as Trade coins. Beginning in 1948 with the crudely manufactured aluminum 25 Mils coin, and followed by a beautiful series of coins replicating motifs on ancient Israel's coins. These coins were minted in vast quantities making it extremely affordable to assemble a beautiful set. In all my years I have never seen *any* increase in value for these coins with the exception of high-grades for the key dates: 1948 25 Mils, 1954 100 Pruta Utrecht Die, and the 1964 5 Agorot. Some varieties have been identified over the years, but have failed to ignite a serious market for the series as a whole.



Israel 1949 1 Pruta. Value \$4 in Brilliant Uncirculated condition.

This would be an excellent series to introduce new collectors at nominal cost, for its historical and artistic value. I doubt the future for these coins would make a good

Continued

investment in financial terms, but it is an excellent choice for collectors.

Israel Commemorative Coins

This segment was the rage back in the 1970's shortly after the victorious Six-Day War and the euphoric spirit that drove people to buy Israel products, thereby creating a collecting audience. Few important points to make:

- 1) The IGCNC attempted to capitalize on this newfound market and produced too many issues over many years with unimpressive designs at overpriced cost, resulting in losing their collector base.
- 2) The good news is many of the earlier issues of relatively small mintage (few thousand) have been sent to the smelters in the 1980's and even today. As a result, the surviving population is actually lower than the original mintage.
- 3) Additionally, even though these coins were not meant for circulation, the coins were issued in PVC-holders, which ultimately became contaminated and damaged. Also, it was common practice for Israeli dealers to handle these coins (even gold) in their pocket. The coins often have abrasions and marks due to mishandling.

I am beginning to see some increase in value for superior specimens and graded coins of the earlier issues (1958 – 1980). Time will tell if these coins reclaim their former prominence.

Continued



Israel 1963 Seafarer 5 Lirot. Value \$120

Israel Medals

State and Commissioned medals were extremely popular in the 1970's. These were issued in very low quantities for many of the silver and gold issues. If the silver commemorative coins are 'sleepers', then medals are 'comatose'. Here again, medals of precious metal were before and now again being smelted. I don't know what would kick start this area, but purchasing at bullion prices is potentially a great opportunity for future appreciation of these masterpieces of art and historic significance.



1965 Masada State Medal 59mm silver. Value \$150.

Continued

Privately Issued Medals and Tokens

Generally speaking, these are appealing to collectors of thematic medals/tokens. Often, they are scarce to rare, and depending on frequency of sales, elusive material has shown to be sought after by serious collectors willing to pay top dollar.



Italy 1946 Haganah Medal – “Their Sons Shall return to their Borders” /Judaea Restored styled after Arch of Titus.
Value unknown.

Banknotes

Palestine Currency has enjoyed steady popularity and value in all conditions. Israel’s currency generally has achieved premium prices for high-graded notes and pricing reflects the population reports data. I expect the market to keep on this course. These are beautiful notes and very collectible with strong demand worldwide.

Continued



Palestine 10 Pounds 1944 in PMG graded 65 EPQ. Sold at StacksBowers 5/23/24 for \$84,000.

To recap, there are plenty of opportunities and resources to help collectors in their pursuit of Israel numismatics!

Comments or inquiries are welcome, send email to:

theshekeleditor@gmail.com. 📧

Recommended Resources

<i>Online Catalog:</i>	https://www.shekelinfo.com/ - online catalog of Israel numismatics https://en.numista.com/ - see all coin's specifications
<i>Graded Coins Population Data:</i>	https://www.pcg.com/pop https://www.ngccoin.com/census/
<i>Online shopping:</i>	https://www.ebay.com/ - largest platform of listings from sellers all over the world https://www.vcoins.com/en/Default.aspx - ancient & world coins (includes Zuzim.com - one of our regular advertisers!) https://www.ma-shops.com/ - many European dealers
<i>Historical auction prices:</i>	https://www.coinarchives.com/ (free limited past history) Individual Auction Houses: too many to list!
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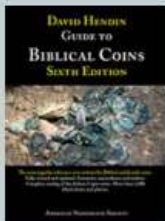
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Guide to Biblical Coins (6th ed.) by David Hendin

Forty-five years after its first edition, Hendin has revised and updated this book to reflect relevant discoveries in archaeology and numismatics of ancient Israel. The metallurgy of Judean coins, symbols on Hasmonaean coins, the Hasmonean coin chronology, Herodian mints, irregular issues, the Jewish War, and coin denominations are only a few of the topics that Hendin has updated. New to the sixth edition is numismatic information about the Kingdom of Adiabene, the Ituraean Kingdom, the Roman Governors of Syria, and coins with images of Old Testament stories. More at numismatics.org/store/gbc6.

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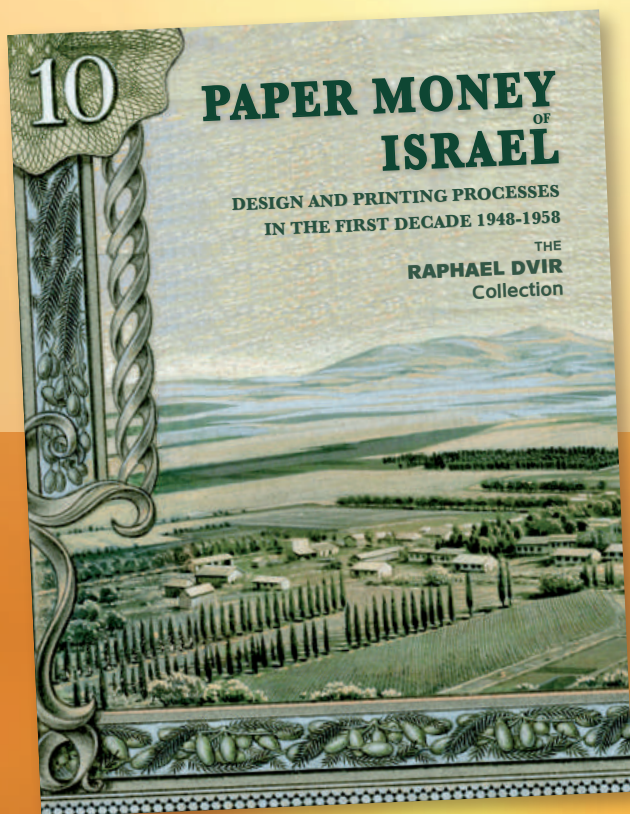
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